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EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY ISSUES IN MODERN WORLD

Abstract

The paper dwells on the principal issues and tendencies in education philosophy introducing the problems that emerge under the circumstances of ever-changing society and globalisation processes. The subject-matter specifics are discussed within the particular context of Armenian educational reality and the pending issues to be tackled.

Keywords: education philosophy, educational system, methodology, educational activities, competence, education quality.

Introduction

Different disciplines appear to be involved in the significant issues of education. Philosophy, as a whole, definitely occupies a lead role among them offering the respective methodological bases for educational sciences. Nevertheless, there is a specific branch of Philosophy that deals with the educational realm in particular – *Educational Philosophy*.

The present research is aimed at revealing and particularising the fundamental issues which need an urgent solution in the domain education philosophy – both modern-world and Armenian context. As a separate discipline, Education Philosophy has been viewed from different standpoints and evaluative outlooks. First and foremost, it is perceived as philosophical field research which analyses the pedagogical activities and education bases, as well as the respective scope of aims and ideals, the methodological knowledge methodology, together with the methods of developing projects and new educational institutions and systems (Ogurcov & Pla-

tonov, 2004).

The Becoming of Education Philosophy Issues

The ideas, research problems formulated within the Education Philosophy date back to the epoch of the most outstanding thinkers of the Ancient World. Eventually, they developed and convalesced alongside the whole history of philosophical thought. The ancient thinkers made reiterated references to the methodology, content, specific methods and principles of education, pedagogical activities, teaching, instruction processes. Till the seventeenth century, namely, the period of the formation and separation of Pedagogy as an independent scientific branch within the paradigm of other sciences and disciplines, Pedagogy as well had covered a long rote of development and formation within the domain of Philosophy. In different epochs, the primary issues of education, the advancement and education of new generations have been the subject matter of researches carried out by different phi-

losophers and whole philosophical schools and trends. Thinkers have explored the subject-matter issues not only within the scope of theoretical speculations but also the issues of practical character setting forward their approaches to the solution of the issues as mentioned earlier, formulating and outlining new educational ideas, approaches, as well as new matrixes of educational system transformations. It is not accidental that some experts happened even to fall into extremity observing Pedagogy as an applied branch of Philosophy.

The aim of Education Philosophy in the modern world is the creation of a model of education system, relatively comprehensive concept with the respective conception bases and methodological apparatus. This aim assumes building up the education system based on a particular philosophical movement, ideology and set of specific concepts. In education philosophy, there are different approaches to the formation of an education system. During the last few decades, the western model principles and methodologies have kept being implemented.

Thus, American authors W. Samuelson and F. Markovic have conventionally differentiated for “purely philosophical” theories which, as they think, appear to have impacted more considerably on the formation and development of the modern concept of education. These principles reckoned are singled out due to the perception of such notions as “truth”, “value”, “freedom”, “love”, “culture”, “power”, and “development”. Dependent on the attitude towards the concepts mentioned above, we differentiate the conceptual bases of idealism, realism (materialism), pragmatism and existentialism (Starnikova, 2008, p. 94).

V. Starnikova, in her monograph *Education Philosophy abroad: the emergence of experience*

points out the western education philosophy directions and the corresponding theorists-representatives of those. According to her classification, we can distinguish the philosophy of experiential education (represented by R. Lochner, V. Bretsinka, I. Shifler, R. S. Peters, P. H. Hirst), pedagogical anthropology direction (represented by O. F. Bolnov, G. Roth, M. Langeveld), J. Derbolav, K. Dienelt), humanistic education (represented by G. Noy, V. Flitner, E. Veniger), critical education (represented by R. Rorty, I. Ilich, P. Freire, M. K. Kinglou), dialogic education philosophy (M. Buber, F. Rozenzweig, Rosenstock-Huessy), postmodernism education philosophy (R. Usher, R. Edwards, O. Fisher, K. Vunshe), alternative education (R. Shtayner, M. Montessori) (Starnikova, 2008).

The Basic Contemporary Problem of the Methodology of Education

The interest in education philosophy keeps growing in the modern world. This is explained by the necessity in the choice of methodology favourable for providing the respective preconditions necessary for the improvement of the education system, quality enhancement and quality assurance. The primary modern issue of education methodology is related to the maintenance person’s individuality, essence inner world within the processes of teaching, instruction, formation and development. Practically, it is based on a person’s individual characteristics, personal inclinations that the whole education process should proceed. The person should stand at the core of the education process, and the education system, correspondingly, should be able to foster the necessary competencies meeting the job-market needs maintaining and taking into consideration the individual integrity. That is to say, and

the personality should not suffer damages because of the enacted pedagogical process, on the contrary, the individual should be enabled to develop, boost their abilities and inherent or inborn aptitudes. Education Philosophy, while dealing with the significant issues in education, highlights and prioritises person's individuality, their moral, honesty, axiological premises, activity and involvement, as well the idea of edifying a citizen. That very mission assumed by education regarding a person has gradually changed from the subject-object type of schema to a subject-subject-type agenda. The latter infers an active or agentive role to be attributed to the person enabling them to assume the active subject's position. Such pattern enables to discover the learner's abilities, the preconditions of their cognitive capacity which should be made use of in order to shape up an individual of active posture, full of initiatives, self-accomplished, thinking, harmonious and creative. This rationality is aimed at transforming the mere knowledge-assimilation process into a learning process of creative and purposeful application of knowledge. Thus, the attitude towards knowledge, its perception and significance in a person's life is gradually changing. In fact, we could state that person-based and humanistic pedagogical trends should be observed as mutually complementary conceptual movements as that is the only way that might help to meet the requirements set forth by the job market to education. The combination of the aforementioned pedagogical trends within one specific model or concept assumes that in practical pedagogical activities, the learner should be perceived as an absolute value within their individuality. And the standpoint efficiency significantly derives from the best qualities accepted as a starting point and optimism as an overall approach principle. The latter infers trust towards

learners, their potential, as well as confidence that the educational mission will definitely result in the achievement of the goals intended, the outcomes predefined at the very beginning of the process. There are approaches according to one of which a learner should be changed, altered in the course of the educational process. At the same time, the counterpart standpoint advises against it – opposing any intention of re-educating, re-shaping the learner. The opponents of re-education claim such an attitude as a form of pressure, aggression against learner's personality. It goes without saying that both standpoints might exceed in their speculations falling into some exaggeration.

In the modern world, the problems connected with education quality – still of current relevance and unsolved – continually remain at the centre of attention of relevant experts, the public, and political authorities. The social groups interested and/or engaged are persistent in their attempts to find the most progressive and high-quality methodology and the preferable solutions to the problems of education quality assurance. We cannot but state that the world has not yet come up with a unified and coalesced approach towards the field. Undoubtedly, one should pay particular attention to the idea of socio-cultural background of person's formation, which gives birth to the corresponding standards that make up the set of priorities for a person's formation. The ideological bases of the subject-matter processes might be illustrated with the help of the state educational policy bases of the Soviet Union which back then set forth the idea of forming a "soviet man" who was meant to be the bearer of the "communistic moral code", indisputably accepting the priority of the state political ideology. It was quite natural that the global, overall aim of shaping up a person of such system of values

was channelled through the soviet education system that imposed individual life-style and through education would instil the targeted system of values and mind-set. Unfortunately, the format boundaries of the paper do not allow to dwell on the comparative analysis of the priorities and aims that have ever emerged in education systems throughout the history of different societies, communities or civilisations as for what kind of person the education system should be developing on its mission.

In the 21st century, mainstream education philosophies have continually been growing to develop a liberal, autonomous citizen of active social involvement. Correspondingly, the knowledge is aimed at reaching that very goal. Over time, there have been new requirements that have been set forward to education philosophy: the need to create learner's new system of values, knowledge that might contribute to people's active lifestyle, adaptation to the world of everlasting changes, bringing about new education quality requirements deriving from science and technological progress, as well as the formation of new needs. Both the general and specialised educational system have started to face new requirements, which anyway are aimed at the development of a citizen or an expert competent of within the society, social groups, existing, being actively involved and assuming responsibility, making decisions out of their personal and public interests. Moreover, that individual is required to possess their personal outlook, a specific system of values, national mindset and the awareness of pertinence and belonging. If we put it short, we can state that the modern education philosophy studies the education methodology, concepts, principles, and ways which might make it possible to combine and marry the achievements of national, global and personal upbringing, the uni-

versal and national values – transferring them through the personal prism. This methodology derives from the fact that the modern world, its technical means and IT allow the human being to communicate freely within the space, exercising even long-distance communication, to provide the necessary management and guidance, and to carry out educational missions. As a matter of fact, from both economic, educational and political perspectives, the correlations among different institutions and individuals keep growing closer, creating more reciprocal links and more profound motivation. It is not accidental that among the essential skills in the education system, we observe “communication” + “critical thinking” + “creativity” + “cooperation” (Poroshenko, 2019, p. 140).

Together and in line with the emerging regularities and tendencies, there are further developments that one might keep observing in education. These developments do bear the influence of the given historical period, country, powerful elite, ethnic culture, and religious characteristics.

Within the process of globalisation and the context of ever-changing society parallel with the integration trend, there is an emerging necessity to form an education system based on national ideas and aims. The formation of the national education system is particularly crucial for Armenia due to the current geopolitical and military-political realm. The educational system of the Republic of Armenia is aimed at forming a patriotic citizen – with national values assimilated. That is to say, the specialists of education philosophy should look for the respective solutions to the current issues within the context of the realisation of national education and national ideas. The main explorations of education philosophy are aimed at solving the issues in education methodology, education ambit, education

system through the relevant combination of philosophical and pedagogical perspectives. It is both essential and necessary to try to adjust the contemporary theories, concepts, methodological approaches of education philosophy which are highly appreciated by the corresponding professional community and are applied in the education systems of the developed countries. The adjustment process assumes the respective adaptation to the local ethnocultural reality with an attempt to harmonise the national and global entities within the given education system avoiding any possible discrepancies.

As a result of education philosophy researches in the 20th century, the idea of competence-based became a cornerstone in education. Indeed, this idea is currently used also by the job market concerning the formation and professional enhancement requirements set forth to the education system – the professional educational domain in particular.

In the 21st century, the competence-based idea gained ground even more. V. S. Lapshina (2013) states, that “in Jacques Delors’s opinion, the leading principle of education is to learn how to do things so that one gets not only a qualification if not, in a broader sense, the competence that will enable them to come up with the respective solutions in a variety of situations and to work in groups” (p. 138).¹ Thus, what we deal with is more than pure knowledge: it comprises the formation of the necessary skills and relevant personal qualities.

Conclusion

Summarising what has already been stated,

we can eventually see the following list of issues that are of particular relevance for the current educational reality in the Republic of Armenia.

1. We should find an answer to the question about what qualities are expected to be developed in the future Armenian, future citizen of the Republic of Armenia: their knowledge, skills, competences, personal qualities and the system of values.
2. We should draw a clear roadmap for a transition from the phase of a contrived combination of the remainders of the Soviet period and western educational technologies to a competitive and stable education system with the respective methodological premises.
3. We should think of effective mechanisms to inspire a positive approach in society towards knowledge – instilling it as an absolute value.
4. We should come up with a precise formulation of the knowledge – relevant for the 21st century and future in general.
5. We do need even more sophisticated methodology, toolkit, and mechanisms to boost the transition from subject-object relations to subject-subject dimension.
6. There is an overwhelming need in redesigning the methodological toolkit at all the possible levels of educational mission prioritising the methods that have the interactive scheme of subject-subject approach at the core.
7. We should prioritise even more the research, experience-based, practice-driven, experiment-based components adding more dynamism to them.
8. We should find even closer ties between the education system and personal career planning – observing education and career plan-

¹ See also Delors, J. (1996). *Education: A Hidden Treasure*. Report of the International Commission on Education for the XXI Century to UNESCO, Sofia, p. 37.

ning as a lifelong and everlasting process.

9. We should think of the mechanisms to increase the level of collaboration between the education system and job market.
10. We should clarify an agenda for continuing developing effective methodology, toolkits, guidebooks and manuals for facilitating the distance / online education for all the formats and levels of education.

To sum up, we can state that the critical question in education philosophy still needs to be answered – what is the utmost outcome of education, how should the individual involved be, what values should that individual bear in the modern world. If we make it more precise, the education philosophy should provide the characteristics of an ideal human. However, there might be thinkers, movements, concepts, who might find it absolutely unnecessary to formulate the precise definition of the image of an ideal human or ideal of a human, as such definition is likely to change in this ever-changing world. Any solution that the education philosophy might come up with has no intention to be final or ideal. This kind of solutions is destined to change in parallel with the constantly changing modern society and information technologies. Moreover, on the contrary, the education philosophy plays a vital role in guiding the contemporary pedagogical science into the time stream, ensuring the methodology, strategic and tactic planning and completion in

line with the ever-changing society.

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